

# THE 1998 TAXPAYER REPORT

From SENATOR HAROLD HOCHSTATTER, 13th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

## Washington State Senate



Dear Taxpayer,

Last year, as Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, I determined that the greatest emphasis should be placed on reading which is the most basic skill children need. This year, as prime sponsor of the Successful Readers Act (E2SSB 6509), the emphasis is on basic phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling. I hope this "Basics First" approach will provide our children with a foundation that will serve them in all future academic pursuits.

The elementary grades are the place to learn to read. We must teach reading successfully in those early years. Currently, students are being remediated in reading all the way into college. This is expensive and counterproductive. We must do it right the first time, and only promote students for achievement, not for age or social reasons.

Additionally, I want children to learn about America before multiculturalism, English before other languages, and abstinence before AIDS education. It only seems fair to you, the parents and taxpayers, that I clearly define my priorities.

I hope you will take a few minutes to review this session overview. As usual, it contains the results of the 13th District survey. If you have any questions or comments about the issues covered, please give me a call or drop me a line. It is an honor to serve you.

Senator Harold Hochstatter  
13th Legislative District

## Education

*One of the highlights of the session was the passage of E2SSB 6509, known as the Successful Readers Act.*



In the spring of 1997, the Commission on Student Learning reported the results of its new fourth grade assessments, which tested students in reading, writing, communications, and mathematics. Only 48 percent of the students met or exceeded the new reading standard. Since reading is the foundation of future learning, it became apparent that something needed to be done. The Successful Readers Act allocates \$17 million to create two grant

programs designed to increase student reading scores. The first grant program will provide about \$9 million for teachers in kindergarten through second grade for training and instructional materials in effective reading instruction. The second grant program provides \$8 million to elementary schools for training teachers in the use of volunteer tutors and mentors for reading and summer school.

1997 was the first year for the new statewide fourth grade assessments, and many parents are unaware of how their schools did. Below is a sampling of reading test scores from the 13th District:

School District	% Tested	Score*
Statewide	93.5	47.6
East Valley (Yakima)	95.7	45.5
West Valley (Yakima)	97.3	59.3
Ellensburg	92.7	50.3
Ephrata	92.6	41.6
Moses Lake	95.1	37.0**
Quincy	98.2	25.9

\*Score = % meeting reading standard

\*\*The scores for the five Moses Lake elementary schools ranged from 21.9 percent to 56 percent. Omitting Discover Elementary's 56 percent yields an average of 32.3 students meeting the statewide standard.

We provided more reading materials, specific reading instruction, and an opportunity for teachers to utilize volunteers more effectively. By helping students become better readers, we give them the confidence and the tools necessary for continued success throughout their educational careers.

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## Higher Education

In 1997, the Legislature created the Advanced College Tuition Payment Program. This allows college tuition to be paid in advance. This allows families to pay for their child's future college education at today's tuition costs. In the 1998 Supplemental Budget, we provided \$1.3 million as the initial working capital for the program to begin operation by the fall of this year. A 1-800 number will be in operation to receive the thousands of calls expected.

## Transportation

*Transportation plan provides \$2.4 billion in funding and lowers car license fees by \$30.*

This year, the Legislature took steps to address the ever-growing challenge of adequate funding for our transportation infrastructure. We passed a proposal that would increase the current transportation budget \$2.4 billion in order to continue the work already in progress and begin design and construction work on future projects.

Because the Governor disagreed with the Legislature (he wanted to raise taxes; the Legislature wanted to use existing revenues) on how to fund these important transportation projects, the decision was made to put a plan on the ballot and let all the citizens of Washington State decide. EHB 2894 funds \$2.4 billion worth of statewide transportation projects without raising the gas tax. Here are the key elements of what will be on the ballot in November:

- ✓ Cut the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) by \$30 per vehicle.
- ✓ Reduce the tax rate on new vehicles after one year instead of the current two years.
- ✓ Approve the sale of \$1.9 billion in new bonds for construction projects.
- ✓ Allow the transfer of MVET dollars out of the general fund without affecting the I-601 spending limit.
- ✓ Shift that portion of local criminal justice funding paid for by the MVET into the general fund and increase the funding by 10 percent.
- ✓ Enhance juvenile justice funding in distressed counties and enhance sales tax equalization in cities without a large retail sales tax base.
- ✓ Re-enact I-601 so it takes a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to amend it or raise taxes for the next two years.

*What transportation construction projects will affect you and the area where you live?*

- ✓ The SR 171 Interchange
- ✓ The Peninsula Drive to Potato Hill Road projects
- ✓ The Highline Canal to Elk Heights project

The funding plan also includes \$418 million for statewide freight mobility projects to keep Washington competitive in the Pacific Rim market, and equalization money for cities and juvenile justice funding for counties.

- ✓ Grant County will receive \$665,000; Kittitas County receives \$342,000; and \$1.2 million goes to Yakima County to enhance juvenile justice enforcement.

The following cities will receive equalization money:

Ephrata	\$8,200	Royal City	\$6,700
Roslyn	\$8,000	George	\$1,400
Warden	\$14,600	S. Cle Elum	\$3,800
Krupp	\$800	Wilson Creek	\$50
Moxee	\$7,200	Mattawa	\$14,400
Cle Elum	\$900	Naches	\$1,700
Moses Lake	\$35,100	Ellensburg	\$5,600
Tieton	\$800	Quincy	\$5,300
Kittitas	\$9,500		



*Sen. Hochstatter was visited by these future policymakers as they attended a rally against teen smoking.*

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## Drunken Driving Legislation

After hearing of tragedy after tragedy due to irresponsible drivers getting behind the wheel after drinking alcohol, the Washington State Legislature cracked down this year. We passed legislation that will make Washington State a national leader in DUI prevention and punishment. The DUI legislative package includes the following provisions:

- ✓ Lowers the legal Blood Alcohol Limit (BAC) level from 0.10 to .08.
- ✓ Requires a 90-day administrative license suspension for first-time DUI offenders.
- ✓ Strengthens existing sentencing laws with higher fines, providing electronic home monitoring, and revoking the driver's licenses of habitual DUI offenders for seven years.
- ✓ Changes the five-year "wash-out" period for DUI offenses to seven years and makes deferred prosecution a once-in-a-lifetime option.

- ✓ Provides \$1.2 million to reimburse local governments for implementing 1998 legislation by charging DUI offenders \$150 to get their licenses re-issued.
- ✓ Requires ignition interlock devices for first-time DUI offenders with high BAC levels (.15 and above) and repeat offenders, regardless of their BAC levels.
- ✓ Allows for the impoundment of vehicles driven by persons with a suspended or revoked license.

*Amidst the successes of the 1998 Legislative Session, there was a frustrating blow that defeated efforts to criminalize partial birth abortions. I and seven other pro-life senators voted "NO" on a do-nothing partial birth abortion bill. We tried to amend it to criminalize the act of withholding aid to a live born infant. When those who wished to withhold such aid defeated the amendment, eight of us voted against the bill.*

## 1998 Questionnaire Report

*Each year, I send out a questionnaire asking you, the people I represent, your opinions and ideas regarding legislative proposals. This helps me throughout my time in Olympia to be sure to represent the entire district. Here are this year's results:*

### **What should be done about Hanford's radiation-free lands?**

- Maintained as a wildlife preserve (27%)
- Relinquished to Washington State (16%)
- Returned to private citizens (56%)

### **Which should qualify for the death penalty?**

- Domestic violence (79%)
- Murdering a pregnant woman (2%)
- Murdering a child under 12 (1%)
- Current death penalty is sufficient (10%)
- Don't support the death penalty (6%)

### **What is the greatest threat to your family's security or liberty?**

- Crime (60%)
- Government debt (21%)
- Immigration (11%)
- AIDS (0.37%)
- Loss of health care (7%)

### **What should be done about bilingual education?**

- Continue to increase spending (2%)
- Teach English rapidly (68%)
- Freeze current spending levels (3%)
- End bilingual education (27%)

### **Sex education?**

- Teach abstinence (79%)
- Do not teach any sex education (17%)
- Distribute condoms at school (4%)

### **Tax breaks for home or private schooled?**

- Yes (57%)
- No (43%)

### **What should be done about affirmative action?**

- End it altogether (65%)
- Require race and gender quotas (4%)
- Leave hiring and firing up to businesses (31%)

### **Should we change the law so at least 5 percent of the signatures collected for initiatives must be collected in each of the nine congressional districts?**

- Yes (89%)
- No (11%)

### **Should we exempt education funding from I-601 spending limits?**

- Yes (27%)
- No (73%)

### **Which tax hinders your family the most?**

- Sales (29%)
- B&O (6%)
- Property (59%)
- MVET (6%)

## Come Join Me And Rep. Joyce Mulliken At The Town Hall Meeting Nearest You.

### **Monday, May 11**

Ellensburg, Hal Holmes Center  
201 N. Ruby, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### **Tuesday, May 12**

Ephrata Courthouse  
Multipurpose Room 35, C St. NW  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### **Thursday, May 14**

Naches Fire Hall, 111 Naches Ave.  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### **Monday, May 18**

Moses Lake Fire Hall  
701 E. 3rd Ave.  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### **Tuesday, May 19**

Mattawa  
Saddle Mt. Intermediate School Library  
500 Riverview Dr.  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

## Contacting Senator Hochstatter

### **Olympia:**

115-B Irving R. Newhouse Building  
PO Box 40482  
Olympia, WA 98504-0482  
(360) 786-7624  
e-mail: hochstat\_ha@leg.wa.gov  
Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-562-6000

### **Moses Lake:**

Office: (509) 765-8164  
Work: (509) 765-0254  
FAX: (509) 765-0255

### **Internet Information:**

<http://www.leg.wa.gov>

**Senator Harold Hochstatter**  
115-B Irving R. Newhouse Building  
PO Box 40482  
Olympia, WA 98504-0482

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